



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



OCIO Directive 2006-017

OCT 10 2006

To: Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus and Offices
Bureau Chief Information Officers

From: W. Hord Tipton
Chief Information Officer

Subject: Procedures for Determining Which Government Information Should Be
Made Available and Accessible to the Public on the Internet

Background:

The Department of the Interior needs to develop standard procedures for reviewing and approving information prior to making it available to the public via the Internet. A number of the bureaus and offices require that the Office of Public Affairs/Office of Communications must approve the content of any documents before posting them to the Web. In the remainder of the bureaus/offices, it appears to be left to the discretion of the program offices that are responsible for the various Web pages. Over the course of the past few years, there have been a few incidents where offices posted sensitive information to their websites that was not appropriate for release to the general public.

OMB Circular A-130, the Electronic FOIA Amendments of 1996, and the E-Government Act of 2002 all emphasize the importance of using electronic media and formats to actively disseminate information to the public concerning an agency's activities and operations. Interior is committed to full compliance with these statutes and OMB Circular A-130 as an important means of maintaining an open and accountable system of Government. At the same time we recognize the importance of safeguarding national security, maintaining law enforcement effectiveness, protecting sensitive business information and internal agency deliberations, and preserving personal privacy.

Purpose:

This directive prescribes the policies and procedures to be followed in determining which Government information should be made available and accessible to the public on the Internet. Please ensure that this directive is implemented immediately and disseminated promptly to employees as appropriate.

Scope:

This directive applies to all Departmental bureaus, offices and associated contracts.

Timeframe:

This directive is effective immediately.

Policy:

Bureaus and offices are expected to comply fully with the policy and procedures set forth below.

1. OMB requirements. In accordance with OMB Circular A-130, bureaus/offices are responsible for providing information to the public consistent with their missions by:
 - (a) Providing information, as required by law, describing agency organization, activities, programs, meetings, systems of records, and other information holdings, and how the public may gain access to agency information resources;
 - (b) Providing access to agency records under provisions of the FOIA and respecting disclosure restrictions according to the Privacy Act, and subject to the protections and limitations provided for in these Acts; and
 - (c) Providing such other information as is necessary or appropriate for the proper performance of agency functions.
2. Web content.
 - (a) In determining whether to make records/information available to the public via the Internet (unless the information is deemed to be in the public domain, e.g., a press release, an informational notice, the DOI telephone directory, etc.), a bureau/office will carefully review the information to ensure that it does not contain any information that is protected from disclosure by one of the nine exemptions under the FOIA (see the Departmental FOIA Handbook (383 DM 15), Chapter 5) and/or the Privacy Act (see 43 CFR 2.56). A bureau/office must review the facts and information in the documents and carefully consider the institutional (Government), commercial (business entities) and personal privacy (individuals) interests that might be impacted by disclosure. If a record or any portion of the record is covered by a FOIA exemption and would not be disclosed to a requester in response to a FOIA request, it must not be placed on the website. The sensitive information may be deleted from the record and the "public version" can then be made available via the Internet (e.g., the public version of the Exhibit 300s that is submitted to OMB each year for IT projects).

(b) Bureau and office CIOs are already tasked with instituting Web site approval processes within their individual bureaus and offices in accordance with OCIO Directive 2004-011. This includes the creation of new domains, sub-domains, and external Web sites (physical or virtual) or hosts (physical or virtual) this includes .org, .com, .gov, .net, .biz, .fed, and .edu. Typically, information from Privacy Act systems regarding employees and members of the public are not made available on public websites without the approval of the subject of the information unless a Privacy Act disclosure exception applies (43 CFR 2.56).

3. Contacts. Employees should consult their bureau/office FOIA Officer and/or Privacy Act Officer if they have questions concerning whether information may be disclosed under the FOIA/Privacy Act. For your convenience, Attachment 1 provides a consolidated listing of your points of contact for the FOIA, Privacy Act, Records Management, Web, and Information Quality programs.
4. Clearances. Before posting any records/information that are not already deemed to be in the public domain to their websites, bureaus/offices will ensure that they are cleared with the following offices as appropriate:
 - a. Office of the Solicitor
 - b. Office of Law Enforcement and Safety
 - c. Building Security Manager
 - d. Bureau IT Security Manager
 - e. Bureau Privacy Act Officer
 - f. Office of Communications/Public Affairs
 - g. Other bureau-specific approvals as required
5. Information Quality. The Department of the Interior (DOI) funds scientific research and development (R&D) through two of its bureaus: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Both of these bureaus post federally-funded R&D on the website <https://radius.rand.org/>. These projects are with states, universities, private contractors, and nongovernmental organizations. Also, there is scientific information for FWS and USGS available on the website Science.gov. Information is available by other means on individual bureau websites, peer review posting, and information quality challenges and responses. All information published appropriately adheres to the Information Quality Guidelines and the peer review standards adopted by DOI and its bureaus in compliance with guidance issued by OMB.

Attachment 2 provides specific guidance that pertains to the Information Quality Guidelines and the information dissemination program which has been adopted from the Department of the Interior Information Quality Guidelines. These are the minimum guidelines that bureaus/offices are expected to implement.

Status Report:

By **October 16, 2006**, please provide the information requested on the attached template (see Attachment 3) to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). You may want to coordinate with your bureau/office Chief Information Officer in preparing your response. The bureau/office responses will be incorporated in the Department's report to OMB.

Contacts:

If you have any questions concerning this bulletin, please contact Ms. Alexandra Mallus, the Departmental FOIA Officer, by telephone at (202) 208-5342, or by email at alexandra_mallus@ios.doi.gov, or Mr. Thomas McClay, the Department's Web Manager, by telephone at (202) 208-4527, or by email at thomas_mcclay@ios.doi.gov.

Attachment 1, DOI Information Management Contacts
Attachment 2, Information Quality Guidelines
Attachment 3, Bureau Information Dissemination Report

cc: Bureau/Office FOIA/Privacy Act Officers
Designated FOIA Attorneys
Bureau/Office Records Officers
Bureau/Office Web Council Members
Bureau/Office Information Quality Officers